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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 32 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, October 29, 1929 at 1:10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

I am going to take a chance today on giving a few reminders about some of the things that should be done around the home before winter. I realize that most farmers are still busy getting out their crops and perhaps don't like to be reminded of the little jobs about the house, but be that as it may, I am going to take the chance. Here are some of the things that need to be done. For example, the walks about the house or between the house and the barn may be broken in places and need a little patching. There may be places in the lawn where the grass is dead and where a little grass seed should be sprinkled or a piece of sod fitted into the space. Possibly the clothes-line posts have rotted off and need replacing. The grape arbor or trellises may need repairing, new posts and wires may be required. If the garden gate is off the hinges or the garden fence in need of repairs, now is a good time to make these repairs, because you will not have time to do the work next spring. The fence rows around the garden should be cleaned up and the weeds and all trash either burned or carted away. If the roof of the poultry house leaks, better repair it before bad weather sets in. Perhaps the poultry yard fence needs a few new posts or new wire.

In sections where rabbits, mice and other rodents are liable to injure fruit trees, all trash should be cleaned away from the base of the trees, and wire or some other form of protector placed around the trunks of the trees. Don't put this off until too late, because rabbits are liable to gnaw trees as soon as the nights get frosty.

It is usually difficult to secure good soil for potting flowers or for starting early vegetable plants in the spring, so it is a good plan to make a compost heap. Use 4 wheelbarrow loads or 4 parts of sods, 2 parts of sharp sand, and 2 parts of rotted manure, and if you can get it, one part leaf mold. Pile these ingredients together in the corner of the garden and add a little water, then in about 2 weeks take a sharp spade or hoe and chop the pile so that the ingredients will be thoroughly mixed and the sods cut in small pieces. Make the pile slightly flat on top so that the rain will keep it moistened, and by next spring you will have a nice lot of potting soil suitable for starting early plants. Turning the pile over 3 or 4 times at intervals of 2 or 3 weeks will help to reduce the materials to a good grade of potting soil. In the dry land sections be sure and add water each time that the pile of soil is turned.

Another problem is what to do with the leaves that are raked from the lawn and about the home, especially where there are large shade trees. One of the best methods of getting rid of leaves is to pile them in the corner of the garden, mixing a little soil with them, also adding a small amount of sulphate of ammonia. About a handful of the sulphate of ammonia should be added to each large wheelbarrow load of leaves. Keep the pile of leaves moderately wet and by the aid of the sulphate of ammonia and soil they will decay during the winter and make leaf mold for mixing with your potting soil.

Bulbs planted in flower beds for spring blooming are frequently destroyed during the winter by mice. This loss can be prevented by surrounding the bulb bed with a strip of wire netting buried in the ground to a depth of about a foot. Dig a trench entirely around the bulb bed, place the wire in position and refill the trench, packing the soil firmly as the trench is filled. Woven wire with about 4 meshes to the inch is desirable, and a good grade of galvanized wire will last under ground for several years, and it is not necessary to take the wire out at the end of the season, but simply leave it in place. If the wire extends to a depth of one foot the mice are not liable to burrow underneath it.

Many persons have the idea that fruit should not be pruned until late in the winter, while, as a matter of fact, pruning can be done at any time after the leaves fall. By doing the pruning early advantage can be taken of good weather, besides this will get the work off your hands before early spring work starts.

Now is a good time to go over pear trees that have blighted during the summer, removing the blighted wood, making the cuts several inches below where the branches are deadened and painting the wounds with creolin such as is used for wood preservative or as a disinfectant in the poultry house. Be sure that you dip your pruning shears in a disinfecting solution between each and every cut.

The peach, plum, apple, and cherry trees can all be pruned during the late fall, and wherever large limbs are removed the wounds should be smooth, close to the trunk or main limbs, and be painted with creolin to prevent decay. Painting with ordinary white lead paint is also satisfactory, but the creolin has a wonderful preserving effect upon wood.